

AMENDMENTS

In the Claims:

1-7. (Cancelled).

8. (Currently Amended) An absorbent article comprising:

a main body including a liquid-pervious top sheet, a back sheet and an absorbent core sandwiched between said top sheet and said back sheet;

a skin-protective ingredient containing layer on one surface of said top sheet such that a skin-protective ingredient is released from said one surface of said top sheet and transferred to skin of a wearer to form an oily film on the skin of the wearer, said skin-protective ingredient containing layer being in a liquefied state at 35°C or higher; and

a support layer substantially entirely and directly coating said skin-protective ingredient containing layer for retaining said skin-protective ingredient on said one surface of said top sheet and isolating said skin-protective ingredient containing layer from the skin of the wearer, said support layer being formed of polyethylene oxide ~~having a molecular weight of from 700 to 1,000 and having a melting point from 35°C to 40°C,~~

wherein the support layer absorbs moisture at a relative humidity of 30% or ~~dissolves in water in the presence of the wearer's sweat and excretions,~~ and is fluidized, and, after the thus-fluidized support layer has moved, the skin-protective ingredient containing layer is exposed to the wearer's skin~~outside to form an oily film,~~ and

wherein said skin-protective ingredient containing layer is formed of at least one compound selected from the group consisting of liquid polyisoprene, squalane,

pristine, ozocerite, ceresine, microcrystalline wax, polyethylene powder, liquid paraffin, petroleum jelly and paraffin.

9-10. (Cancelled).

11. (Previously Presented) The absorbent article as set forth in claim 8, further including:

at least one of a leak-preventive cuff for preventing side leakage and leg cuff for preventing leakage through an area around a wearer's thighs, and the at least one of a leakage-preventive cuff and leg cuff are located between said top sheet and said skin-protective ingredient containing layer and said support layer.

12-15. (Cancelled).

16. (Previously Presented) The absorbent article as set forth in claim 8, wherein said skin-protective ingredient containing layer and said support layer are provided in regions of the absorbent article that are fitted to the thighs of the wearer.

17. (Previously Presented) The absorbent article as set forth in claim 8, wherein said skin-protective ingredient containing layer and said support layer are provided in regions of the absorbent article that are fitted to one or more of the back, the buttocks or the abdominal region of the wearer.

18. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 8, wherein the support layer consists essentially of a material that absorbs moisture at a relative humidity of 30%.

19. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 18, wherein the support layer consists essentially of polyethylene oxide.

20. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 8, wherein the polyethylene oxide has a molecular weight of from 700 to 1,000 and having a melting point from 35°C to 40°C.

21. (New) An absorbent article comprising:

a main body including a liquid-pervious top sheet, a back sheet and an absorbent core sandwiched between said top sheet and said back sheet;

a skin-protective ingredient containing layer on one surface of said top sheet such that a skin-protective ingredient is released from said one surface of said top sheet and transferred to skin of a wearer to form an oily film on the skin of the wearer, said skin-protective ingredient containing layer being in a liquefied state at 35°C or higher; and

a support layer substantially entirely and directly coating said skin-protective ingredient containing layer for retaining said skin-protective ingredient on said one surface of said top sheet and isolating said skin-protective ingredient containing layer from the skin of the wearer, said support layer being formed of polyethylene oxide,

wherein the support layer absorbs moisture at a relative humidity of 50%, and is fluidized, and, after the thus-fluidized support layer has moved, the skin-protective ingredient containing layer is exposed to the wearer's skin, and

wherein said skin-protective ingredient containing layer is formed of at least one compound selected from the group consisting of liquid polyisoprene, squalane, pristine, ozocerite, ceresine, microcrystalline wax, polyethylene powder, liquid paraffin, petroleum jelly and paraffin.